

Through “Murphy’s” Eye

Story by Heike Hasenauer

SFC Mark Baker, an intelligence analyst at Fort Huachuca, Ariz., started drawing his “Private Murphy” cartoons in 1994, when he was stationed at Fort Bragg, N.C.

“At that time, I drew cartoons strictly to appeal to guys in my unit,” Baker said. “Gradually, I began drawing cartoons that I thought all soldiers would be able to relate to.”

Baker, a former cavalry scout, draws on his own Army experiences to create Murphy’s cartoon stories, he said.

The wide variety of assignments Baker has experienced over the years — in various units, including armor, air and ground cavalry, light infantry and special forces — has provided him ample ideas for Murphy’s escapades, he said.

In 2000, the Army Times picked up his cartoon strip, “Private Murphy’s Law,” and it’s been published weekly since then.


“Not all of my cartoons are well received,” he said. “Some folks have told me that they think my cartoons are anti-Army. That’s not the case at all. I love the Army and, after 17 years of being a soldier, I believe I’ve earned the right to poke some fun at my profession.”

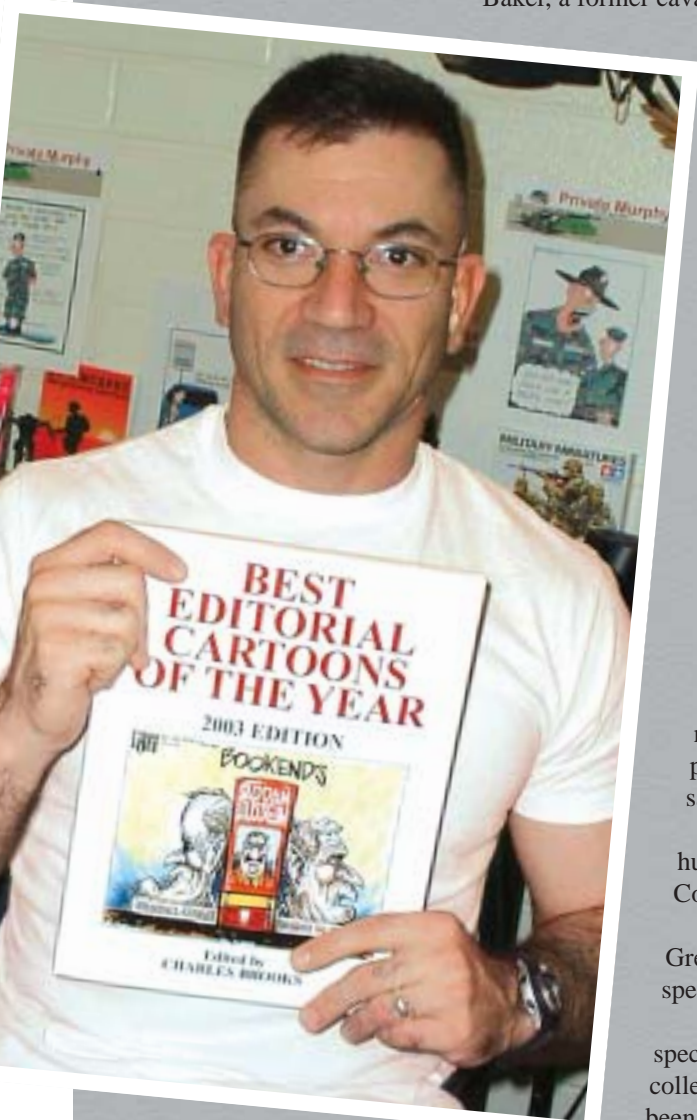
“If I draw Murphy with his brain jumping out of his head because he’s thinking about re-enlisting, that doesn’t mean I’m trying to discourage soldiers from re-enlisting,” Baker said. “Come on, lighten up.”

More fun than offense, Baker’s cartoons have also appeared in *Armor* and *Legion* magazines. And the artist is now working on his third book of cartoons. The two already in print are sold at AAFES military clothing sales stores, Baker said.

Additionally, one of Baker’s cartoons was recently selected from hundreds of other submissions for publication in Pelican Publishing Company’s “Best Editorial Cartoons of the Year — 2003.”

His cartoon characters have also appeared in illustrations for Patriot Greetings, a veteran-owned greeting-card company that produces cards specifically for the armed forces.

“It’s a good company, with a good cause. Its employees fill a soldier-specific need, and they donate a portion of the company’s proceeds to a college scholarship fund for the children of military personnel who have been killed or seriously injured in the line of duty,” Baker said. 



SFC Mark Baker



